



Lesson 12 – Mark 1:5

As we saw from the last 3 lessons, John the Baptist preached about repentance and, as the people responded to God's message by confessing their sins, John baptized them.

Principle: True repentance results in obedience to God.

Why did John baptize people? God had told him to do it.

John 1:31, 33 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. Verse 31 shows that John was told that the Messiah was going to be revealed to him and subsequently through him to Israel. Verse 33 shows how God was going to reveal the Messiah to John.

Principle: Obedience to God is shown in what we do.

Mark 1:5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Notice that the people were baptized in the river. The word "baptize" means to dip or immerse. Look at verse 10, which describes Jesus' baptism. It states that He came up out of the water.

In Acts 8:35-39, in another account of a man being baptized, we read that he went down into the water and was baptized. **35Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.**

Baptism is now done in the church, not in the name of John the Baptist, but in the name of Jesus Christ, as was commanded in Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.... It is still immersion, but it pictures what, at the time of John, was still to come: the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God.

Lesson 13 – Mark 1:6

What is the significance of the description of John's clothing and diet?

Mark 1:6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

John the Baptist didn't have an easy life, yet what he did was very important work. His clothing identified him as a prophet to the people who saw him, just like a police uniform identifies a man or woman as an officer of the law to us. 2 Kings 1:5-8 tells about the dress of a prophet: **5And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?" 6So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' " 7Then he said to them, "What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?" 8So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." (Elijah was a prophet, who told the king what God had said.)**

Another passage in Zechariah 13:4 implies that prophets usually wore rough garments rather than those of silk or linen, which rich people generally wore. 4"And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair ... It may seem strange to you that John wore camel's hair for a garment, but today we wear cowhide in our leather jackets, belts and shoes and think nothing of it. Frontier scouts of the old West wore buckskin shirts and pants made from deer leather. No one thought they were strange.

The camel's hair robe or coat represented the prophet as a burden-bearer, like the camel. The prophet talked to God in behalf of the people. In return, God would give the prophet messages for the people. John had the burden of turning the people toward God, and of getting them to see their need for repentance. Sometimes that wasn't easy to do. The wise ones listened to him and responded, the foolish ones turned away from God.

Principle 1: A person's appearance may be different from yours, yet he or she may be on a mission for God as John was. 1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us that man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. We also need to look at character, not clothing.

Principle 2: God probably will not call you to dress in camel's hair, but He does call you to dress modestly and appropriately for the activity. That means: don't wear gym shorts to a formal dinner and don't wear an evening dress to a hayride.

John's diet was different from most people's, although it was a common poor man's diet among those who lived in the desert. If locusts refer to the grasshopper-like insects we know, they were a good source of protein. They were usually salted and dried, and at times dipped in wild honey for a sweet treat. Locust was also the name of an evergreen tree 6-9 meters tall. It had long pods that contained carob beans, which could be eaten. However, most references to the word "locust" in the Bible refer to the insect.

In Luke 7:33, it also says that John didn't eat bread or drink wine. Do you remember the passage in Luke 1:15 where the angel Gabriel told John's father that the son born to him in his old age was never to drink wine or strong drink (anything intoxicating)? John followed those instructions, even after he became a man and could decide for himself.

Principle 3: Following what God says is smart, no matter how old you are.

Principle 4: God will probably not ask you to eat an unusual diet, but He is calling you to eat healthily and to take good care of the body that He gave you. If you have accepted Jesus

Christ as your Lord and Savior, (see Romans 10:8-13), you gave all of yourself to God. That includes your body. It's no longer yours alone, it belongs to Him. **(1 Corinthians 6:19-20 do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.)** You and I are guardians now of what is God's, so we must take good care of it.

Lesson 14 – Mark 1:7

Mark 1:7 (John preached)... **There comes one mightier than I after me, the latchet (shoestring) of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.**

"There comes One..." - At this point in time, when John the Baptist was making this statement, he knew the Messiah was coming soon, but he did not know Who the Messiah would be. That's why at first he didn't use a name for the Messiah. God did, however, give JB a big clue as to how to identify Who was His Son, the Christ (**John 1:35 John the Baptist said,... And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the Same said unto me, Upon Whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the Same is He Who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.**) By this clue, JB knew that he would be able to recognize and know without a doubt Who the true Messiah, God's Son, was...by a manifestation (appearance) of the Holy Spirit in some form.

“There comes one mightier than I after me, the latchet (shoestring) of Whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.” - John's message to the people told them several details about the coming Messiah. First, the Christ would be more powerful and be able to do mightier things than John. As far as we know, John never did any miracles. Jesus did many. In fact, the apostle John, a different man from JB, wrote in his book, the Gospel of John, that Jesus did so much teaching and so many miracles that he didn't think the world could hold all the books it would take to record them! (**John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.**)

John the Baptist was a humble man, who was grateful for the privilege of being the one chosen to bring the good news of the coming of the Messiah. He understood that the spotlight needed to be on the Son of God. In the gospel of the apostle John, John the Baptist is recorded as saying of the Messiah, **"He must increase, but I must decrease."** (**John 3:30**)

"I am not worthy..." - Secondly, John knew the Messiah was the Son of God, which made the Messiah of higher rank and greater holiness than John. John didn't feel worthy to act as the Messiah's lowliest servant, unloosing His sandals.

Thirdly, John recognized the difference in their work. John baptized the people with water; Jesus would baptize His people with the Holy Spirit. (We'll discuss what that means in a later lesson.) John understood that his preaching and baptizing was a preparatory and temporary work. What the Messiah would do would be eternal, lasting forever.

Principle: It is a great privilege to serve the Lord in whatever capacity He directs. Like John the Baptist, you and I have a specific purpose for being on this earth, and for being here now, in this day and time. If you don't yet know what that purpose is, start asking God to reveal it to you. Ask Him also to show you how to fulfill that purpose. He will. He wants you to know

and do His will for your life.

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